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Tales of Paul Bunyan

EVERETT JENSEN, '32

ANY logger who has ever worked under Paul Bunyan will tell you that when Paul worked, he worked. Nothing was done by halves. Napoleon and Edison copied Paul's methods of working with very little sleep but they could never stand working twenty-five hours a day for a period of months as was Paul's habit. And, of course, the men that worked in Paul's camps couldn't expect to do much loafing.

In spite of being such a driver of men Paul believed in the old saying, "All work and no play makes the lumber-jack a dull boy." He made a practice of giving the men a day off every two or three years. Now the lumber-jack has a well earned reputation and Paul's men were no exception to the rule. It was his custom to notify neighboring towns three or four months in advance of the holiday so that the authorities would have sufficient time to get ambulances, an army of doctors and nurses, and also to erect a hundred or so temporary hospitals.

As this was rather an expensive proceeding Paul decided he would have to think of something that would keep his men out of the towns. That seemed to be an impossibility but Paul had solved harder problems. He decided after considerable thinking that some kind of a game in which his camps could compete against each other was the answer. It would have to be a rough game where his jacks could wear corked boots and could do considerable rough and tumble fighting. And so Paul invented the first football and formulated the first set of rules.

There were only two simple rules: first; in case of dispute between a team and a referee, no axes, peaveys, or canthooks could be used on the referee. (This rule was later amended to read—In case of disputes the referee must at all times be given a half mile start.) Secondly; since it was practically suicide for a small man to play, no man weighing less than fifteen hundred pounds could play. This eliminated the little chore boy who wanted to play but weighed only eight hundred pounds.

It required the hides from one hundred and forty-three steers and a yearling heifer to make the football. Two guy ropes taken from a two hundred-foot spar tree were used to lace the ball. Even Paul himself was unable to blow up the ball so he used a special device of his own which directed the wind of Kansas tornadoes into the ball.

North Dakota, which Paul had logged for the King of Sweden, was selected as the scene of operations. The Black Hills were

erected as a grandstand for any spectators. Johnny Inkslinger was chosen to keep score.

The men were skeptical about this new game of Paul's but the old logger was boss in his own camps and if he said they were to try the game why they were to try it and that was all. After the first thirty-three minutes of play two hundred and four men were carried off the field. One hundred and fifty of them would never wield an axe again. The game was slowed down considerably due to the lack of a large reserve of referees. The men finally gave up in disgust because they claimed that it was too much of a lady's game and they would have nothing to do with it.

Time has proved the statement of these grizzled old loggers that the game is too effeminate for he-men. The original game is degenerated and the rules have been modified until it is thought safe enough for college boys. Need more be said.

